Message from Lord Avebury to Fretilin, sent by Radio, September 1985

I am Eric Avebury, chairman of the Parliamnetary Human Rights Group in Britain, and a member of the House of Lords. To begin with, I send warmest greetings to the people of East Timor and congratulations on establishing radio contact with the outside world. It is absolutely vital for the friends of East Timor to have the best and most up-to-date information about the situation, if we are to fight alongside you for your human rights, including the right of self-determination. We want to know your economic situation, the way you are being treated by the Indonesian occupation forces, and exact details of the time, place and names of incidents involving violations of human rights.

In my work on the question of East Timor, I have tried to bring to the notice of my own government, of fellow Parliamentarians in democratic countries, and of the United Nations, the continued illegality of Indonesia's occupation of East Timor. The UN has laid down principles governing the process of decolonisation in General Assembly Resolution 1514, which demands a plebiscite, or a vote of an assembly elected by universal franchise, to determine the political future of a colonial territory. This process was never completed in East Timor, because the armed agression of Indonesia brought the people's efforts to establish their own government to an abrupt end.

Now the United Nations has called on the Secretary General to use his good offices to find a solution, in consultation with all the parties concerned. We have continually pressed the Secretary General, and the governments of the countries which supported that resolution, to acknowledge that the people of East Timor themselves are the most important of all the parties, and we have asked what steps have been taken to consult you, either by means of a visit of the Secretary General or his representative to East Timor, or by extending an invitation to your leaders to meet him on neutral territory such as Australia. Maybe you could tell me whether any approach has been made to Fretilin on this important matter.

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And if so could you let me know, so that I could pass this information on to the Secretary General.

If the answer is that you have received no communication from the Secretary General, would you be prepared to invite him to meet you? I realise that the military situation may make it difficult for him to visit East Timor, though it would be possible in thory for the UN to offer to arrange a truce, with perhaps a small UN force to monitor it. What would you think of that idea, or alternatively, would you agree to meet the Secretary General in Darwin, if he would guarantee safe passage out of East Timor and back again afterwards, for your representatives?

Please do let me know in what way you would like us to help you in your noble struggle. Four hundred and fifty Parliamentarians from 13 democratic countries have signed a decalaration calling for the participation of your people in the decisions affecting their future, and we will not allow the cause to be lost. A great and important principle is at stake: the principle that national boundaries must not be altered by force. We fought a great war against Hitler to assert that principle, and it is embodied in Chapter 4 of the United Nations Charter. If the world allows it to be violated now, millions will have sacrificed their lives in vain. Keep up the struggle - you are fighting not just for the rights of East Timor, but for the peace and security of the whole of mankind.